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# Message Text

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12
ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 IO-12 SR-02 ORM-03 RSR-01 /142 W
---------- 021150
P 100210 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9156
INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 3806

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AF, IR, UR, PK
SUBJECT: GOP STATEMENT ON RELATIONS WITH IRAN, AFGHANISTAN AND OTHER NEIGHBORS- COMMENT

REF : ISLAMABAD 3776 ( NOTAL)

SUMMARY: GOP MAY 8 STATEMENT LAUDING RELATIONS WITH IRAN, DENOUNCING DOMESTIC OPPOSITION AND SHARPLY CRITICIZING AFGHANISTAN ISSUED IN CONTEXT BHUTTO' S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO TEHRAN. GOP MOTIVES PROBABLY INCLUDED REASSURING SHAH THAT GOP REJECTED PAK OPPOSITION CRITICISM OF HIM OVER SULZBERGER INTERVIEW; POLITE REMINDER OF GOP UNHAPPINESS WITH COMMENTS ABOUT IMMINENT DISSOLUTION OF PAKISTAN; AND SCORING OF POINTS AGAINST DOMESTIC OPPOSITION. LESS CLEAR WHY GOP TOOK SUCH HARD LINE AGAINST AFGHANISTAN AFTER LONG PERIOD OF RELATIVE RESTRAINT. COULD BE THAT GOP WISHED SURFACE ITS ANNOYANCE WITH RGA IN CONJUNCTION WITH ATTACK ON PATHAN REGIONALISTS IN PAKISTAN. AFGHAN
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AMBASSADOR QTE APPALLED UNQTE BY STATEMENT AND FEARS SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS IN PAK- AFGHAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. REFTEL SUMMARIZES LONG STATEMENT ON RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND OTHER NEIGHBORS, ESPECIALLY AFGHANISTAN, ISSUED BY GOP MAY 8. STATEMENT LAUDS PAK- IRANIAN RELATIONS AND DESCRIBES IRANIAN AID TO PAKISTAN DURING 1971 WAR; HARSHLY CRITICIZES AFGHANISTAN FOR QTE BLATANT INTERFERENCE UNQTE IN PAK AFFAIRS; AND DENOUNCES DOMESTIC POLITICIANS ( READ NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY) FOR ATTEMPTING DISRUPT PAK- IRANIAN RELATIONS BY THEIR RECENT CRITICISM OF SHAH FOR HIS REMARKS RE BALUCHISTAN IN APRIL INTERVIEW WITH SULZBERGER. ( ISLA-MABAD 3701). ALTHOUGH IT APPEARS AIMED MAINLY AT NAP OPPOSITION, STATEMENT CONSTITUTES IN EFFECT MAJOR PRONOUNCE-MENT ON GOP POLICY TOWARD IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN. ( COMMENTS RE OTHER NEIGHBORS, I. E., SOVIETS AND INDIA, WERE BY CON-TRAST RATHER PERFUNCTORY.) STATEMENT OBVIOUSLY ISSUED IN CONTEXT BHUTTO' S SCHEDULED MAY 10 DEPARTURE FOR TEHRAN, BUT NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR TO US WHY GOP FELT CONSTRAINED TO ISSUE SUCH LENGTHY AND CONTENTIOUS STATEMENT AT THIS TIME, ESPECIALLY ONE SO SHARPLY CRITICAL OF AFGHANISTAN.

2. RESOUNDING DEFENSE OF SHAH AGAINST DOMESTIC CRITICS IN PAKISTAN PROBABLY HAD SEVERAL OBJECTIVES. ONE PRIMARY MOTIVE UNDOUBTEDLY WAS TO MOLLIFY SHAH ( ANTICIPATING HIS SENSITIVITY) AND REASSURE HIM ON EVE OF BHUTTO VISIT THAT GOP CATEGORICALLY REJECTED NAP CRITICISM OF HIM. AT SAME TIME, ASSERTION IN GOP STATEMENT THAT IT WAS SULZBERGER RATHER THAN SHAH WHO HAD MADE QTE DEPLORABLE UNQTE REMARKS RE IMMINENT BREAKUP OF PAKISTAN COULD BE INTERPRETED AS VEILED REMINDER TO SHAH OF GOP UNHAPPINESS WITH SUCH RE-MARKS. DOMESTIC POLITICS ALSO FIGURED IN STATEMENT, IN THAT IT PROVIDED BHUTTO ADMINISTRATION FURTHER OPPORTUNITY TO SCORE POINTS AGAINST NAP OPPOSITION BY PORTRAYING THEM AS DISLOYAL CRITICS OF PAKISTAN' S CLOSE AND VALUABLE ALLY. DETAILS OF IRANIAN AID TO PAKISTAN DURING 1971 WAR LIKELY TO RAISE EYEBROWS IN NEW DELHI AND ELSEWHERE, BUT SHOULD HELP GOP AT HOME AND DEMONSTRATING TO PAK POPULACE THAT COUNTRY HAS STRONG AND FORTHCOMING FRIENDS. ( IN BRIEF MAY 9 CON-VERSATION WITH CHARGE, IRANIAN CHARGE TAVALLALI EXPRESSED FAVORABLE VIEW OF GOP STATEMENT; HE FELT IT WOULD

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IMPROVE CLIMATE FOR BHUTTO VISIT AND INDICATED NO DISCOMFIT OVER RELEASE OF SPECIFICS ON IRANIAN WARTIME AID TO PAKISTAN.)

3. GOP MOTIVE IN LAMBASTING AFGHANISTAN AT THIS TIME IS HARDER TO FATHOM. IN GOP EYES, RGA' S CONTINUED HARPING OF PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE MAY HAVE JUSTIFIED HARSH COMMENTS.

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ON OTHER HAND, BHUTTO GOVT HAS HITHERTO TAKEN FAIRLY RE-
STRAINED ATTITUDE TOWARD AFGHAN ACTIVITIES RE PUSHTUNISTAN
AND WE KNOW OF NO EXCEPTIONAL RECENT RGA MOVES IN THIS
FIELD WHICH MIGHT HAVE MAGNIFIED GOP CONCERN. ( WOULD
APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS AMEMBASSY KABUL MIGHT HAVE IN THIS
REGARD.) GOP MIGHT BE MIFFED AT CONTINUED USE OF AFGHANISTAN
AS SANCTUARY FOR BENGALEES ESCAPING FROM PAKISTAN ( ISLAMA-
BAD 3712), YET THIS HARDLY SEEMS SUFFICIENT TO HAVE PROVOKED
SUCH STRONG REACTION. WE WOULD BE ALMOST TEMPTED TO CREDIT
THIS PART OF STATEMENT TO SIMPLE GOP EXASPERA-
TION WHICH FINALLY REACHED FLASH POINT, EXCEPT FOR FACT
THAT BHUTTO NORMALLY DOES NOT LET EMOTIONS DICTATE POLICY.
ANOTHER MORE LIKELY EXPLANATION IS THAT GOP WISHED SURFACE
ITS ANNOYANCE WITH RGA IN CONJUNCTION WITH ATTACK ON PAK
PATHAN REGIONALISTS IN NAP WHO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY TIES WITH
RGA.

4. WHATEVER GOP MOTIVE FOR ATTACK ON AFGHANISTAN, IT HAS
SEVERELY JOLTED LOCAL AFGHAN MISSION. IN MAY 9 CONVERSATION
WITH CHARGE, AFGAN AMBASSADOR POPAL SAID HE WAS QTE APPALLED
UNQUOTE BY STATEMENT. HE TERMED QTE ABSOLUTELY FALSE UNQTE
CHARGE THAT AFGHAN TROOPS HAD BEEN CONCENTRATED ON PAK
BORDER IN 1971. OBSERVING THAT NAP- UDF OPPOSITION WAS
VIRTUALLY POWERLESS AT THIS STAGE, AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED
PUZZLEMENT AS TO WHY GOP HAD DECIDED TO ATTACK THEM, AND
AFGHANISTAN AS WELL, IN THIS MANNER.

5. POPAL EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT STATEMENT WOULD HAVE SERI-
OUS REPERCUSSION ON PAK- AFGHAN RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY WHEN
COMBINED WITH WHAT HE CONSIDERS UNFORTUNATE GOP CHOICE OF
NEW AMBASSADOR M. A. H. ISPAHANI TO KABUL. POPAL NOTED THAT
AFGHANS WERE BY NO MEANS PLEASED WITH ISPAHANI APPOINTMENT;
NOT ONLY WAS HE ELDERLY AND OUT OF TOUCH WITH RECENT
DEVLOPMENTS BUT HE HAD PERSIAN NAME, WAS OF PERSIAN DESCENT
AND SPOKE PERSIAN. CONCLUDING, POPAL SAID HE FEARED THAT
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ISPAHANI WOULD BE OFF TO BAD START WITH GOP STATEMENT OF MAY 8.
WITH PRESENT DELICATE BALANCE IN KABUL, EVEN SUCH MATTER
AS PARLIAMENTARY RATIFICATION HELMAND WATERS TREATY WITH
IRAN COULD BE JEOPARDIZED.
SOBER

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